



STILL SERVING

Published by the Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB, D.C.

June 2006

ADJUSTMENTS ESSENTIAL TO MAINTAINING TRICARE



Dr. Winkenwerder

Adjustments to the Tricare program are necessary to ensure military health benefits are maintained at a superior level for many years, according to Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs. The much-anticipated changes will not change the benefits military beneficiaries receive under the program, he added. "Sustaining the benefit is about making needed adjustments that are fair, that are thoughtful, that are equitable, and that go a long way towards sustaining the superior program that we have today," Winkenwerder said.

The adjustments, which will affect enrollment costs and other fees, will apply to the large military retiree population served by Tricare. Raising costs to beneficiaries is a controversial issue, but DoD cannot keep up its medical system if the costs keep increasing at the rate they have been, Winkenwerder said. **(No congressional action is expected this year. See story, Page 6)**

"We are recognizing a reality that we have in front of us, and not to act or not to take appropriate steps to recognize that reality would be placing the promise of a great health benefit at risk," he said. "Doing nothing is not a secure foundation for the future."

Health costs for the military have been rising at an increasingly higher rate in the past five years, due to added and expanded benefits, reduced cost contributions, regular health inflation, and a growing population of retirees under the age of 65, Winkenwerder said. Costs have doubled in five years, he said, and if they continue at this rate, it is estimated that the health system will take up 8 percent of the DoD budget, at \$64 billion, by 2015.

Determining what adjustments will be made has been a long process, involving the surgeons general of the services, the service chiefs, the Joint Staff, assistant secretaries for manpower and readiness, and personnel chiefs, Winkenwerder said. It has been a joint effort, and all the entities approve of the results, he said.

The military health system will employ other strategies to make operations more efficient and save money, Winkenwerder said. DoD will promote generic drug use in pharmacies, the use of the mail-order pharmacy, better hospital use, and joint procurement with the Veterans Affairs Department, he said. DoD's new electronic record system also will save the department money by reducing medical errors and speeding up the movement of information, he added. The proposed changes will save billions of dollars over the years and will allow the department to sustain the best health system in the country, he said.

'DENTAL LOTTERY' SET FOR NOON JULY 7

Millions of dollars are shared by lottery winners across the nation each year. However, military retirees in the National Capital Area have an opportunity to vie for something more realistic – dental treatment. For the 12th straight year, the Bolling Dental Clinic's Advanced Education in General Dentistry Residency is offering a screening program for selected retirees. Interested participants will compete for some 50 examinations by telephone lottery to the Retiree Activities Office at noon Friday, July 7. Technicians from the dental clinic will interview applicants calling 202 767-5244, starting at noon. **WALK-INS AND CALLS TO THE RAO OR THE DENTAL CLINIC AT ANY OTHER TIME WILL NOT BE HONORED.** Callers with conditions conducive for residency training will

be scheduled for thorough examinations at the clinic Saturday morning, July 15. Results of the examinations will determine those selected for appointments over the next year. Most eligible are those who have not received dental treatment in recent years. Two telephone lines will be in use and callers can expect busy signals. "Usually, about 200 retirees play the lottery," said Col. John Moser, RAO director. "Persistence in redialing can be rewarding. We find the random selection to be the fairest way to handle the calls." No dependents will be scheduled. Bolling is one of the few bases to host a residency dental program. Newly commissioned dentists receive a year's intensive training before receiving permanent assignments. Retirees offer dental conditions not normally found among younger active-duty members.

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Col. (Ret.) John Moser, Director, Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB, D.C.



Colonel Moser

Retiree Appreciation Day 2006 is getting closer. We are scheduled at the Bolling Clubs for Saturday, 30 September. There are numerous reasons for advancing the date from the October/November time frame of recent years. Foremost, the club was only available at this particular time.

To support the earlier date, we have advanced the mailing date for our next edition of *Still Serving* to the first week in September. The Bolling Clinic will provide the popular all-inclusive blood tests, in lieu of flu shots which normally become available in late October. Andrews AFB has scheduled its Retiree Appreciation Day for 4 November. Since both bases are part of the Air Force District of Washington (AFDW), we do not wish to conflict with each other.

And while on the subject of AFDW, I want to welcome aboard its new commander, Maj. Gen. Robert L. Smolen. There has been a realignment of units and functions of this major air command.

Further, Bolling will become a joint base with Navy and Coast Guard activities next year. This concept requires some DoD installations in close proximity to share infrastructure support and management activities. Of 12 recommended joint bases, 10 involve Air Force installations, with the Air Force designated as the lead service for six. At Bolling, Navy has the lead. The 11th Wing remains responsible for Bolling AFB but the relationships between AFDW, 11th Wing, Andrews AFB and tenant organizations are undergoing changes. The Main Gate at Bolling will close in June for at least 10 months and traffic will undergo a massive re-routing. I foresee interesting traffic patterns, especially during rush hours.

I am concerned that we are NOT recruiting new volunteers. For the last few years, we have been holding our own, but our ranks are thinning. While the Active Force is appreciative that we are contributing more than 2 man-years of service annually, it appears that we shall not be able to continue this contribution. I need at least 5 volunteers (from an Air Force retiree pool of nearly 20,000 in the Greater Washington Area). The work is interesting. We are on the net, working conditions are good and 20 hours a month is really not that much time. AND YOU DON'T PUNCH A TIME CARD. What else can I say to make you come in? Call me at (202) 767-5244. I'm usually at the Retiree Activities Office on Wednesdays. See you in September.

GENERAL LORD CITES AIRMEN'S 'LONG-TERM CARE'

Air Force Space Command's enlisted personnel bestowed the Order of the Sword upon Gen. Lance W. Lord, AFSC commander before his retirement from active duty in March. It is the highest honor airmen can bestow on a leader. "You have chosen wisely," CMSAF Gerald R. Murray told 500 active-duty and retired enlisted airmen in attendance. "General Lord has made a positive impression as the leader of Air Force Space Command—as he's done through every level of his career...General Lord knows airmen are (the Air Force's) greatest asset," Murray said. General Lord responded: "From my first assignment at Minot AFB, N.D., where 'only the chosen are frozen,' I have been in the care of airmen," General Lord said. "It's a dumb general who doesn't listen to his chief." General Lord is the eighth AFSC recipient of the Order of the Sword since the command's inception in 1982. The ancient ceremony is patterned after an order of chivalry founded during the middle ages. Non-commissioned officers conduct the ceremony to honor leaders who have made significant contributions to the enlisted corps. The sword is a symbol of truth, justice, and power rightfully used. The first recorded use of it in America was in the 1860s when Gen. Robert E. Lee was presented a sword by his command. Air Force NCOs revived, revised and adopted the ceremony in 1967.



General Lord

Still Serving is published in February, June and October by the Retiree Activities Office, Bolling AFB DC, to provide retirees and family members information affecting the military retiree community. Content does not

necessarily reflect official views, or is endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Air Force. Comments may be directed to the Bolling AFB Retiree Activities Office, 11th Mission Support Group/CVR, 110 Luke Avenue, Suite 302, Bolling AFB DC 20032. Phone (202) 767-5244; E-Mail RAO@bolling.af.mil; FAX (202) 404-5342. *Still Serving* may be downloaded from www.bolling.af.mil/orgs/tenants/rao or www.dcmilitary.com/stillserving. Changes of address must be sent to Defense Finance and Accounting Service, P.O. Box 7130, London KY 40732-7130.



EIGHT FORMER CMSAFS MEET, COMPARE NOTES

Eight former chief master sergeants of the Air Force met with airmen and service leaders at Bolling AFB and the Pentagon. The conference was hosted by the incumbent, CMSAF Gerald R. Murray. It's been 63 years since the first CMSAF, Paul W. Airey, enlisted, but he sees the similarity between today's airmen and those who served alongside him. "The people who served back then had the same drive and determination as the airmen today," he said. "The difference is the education and the knowledge today's young people have. You can talk to an 18- or 19-year-old today about anything, and they have an opinion on everything that's going on in the world. I had an opinion when I was 18 years old and it involved who was going to win the next baseball pennant, not what was going on in other places of the world." He said the education level of today's senior non-commissioned officers, in most cases, surpasses that of the officer corps he served with in World War II. Eighth CMSAF Sam E. Parish agreed and said that the Air Force, while young compared to the other military branches, is rich in its heritage. "We're still not old enough to have the traditions [of other services]," he said. But he sees that changing for the Air Force in the future. At Lackland AFB, Tex., the NCO Academy was renamed to honor CMSAF Robert D. Gaylor, the fifth CMSAF. Four former chiefs have died, Donald L. Harlow, Richard D. Kisling, Thomas N. Barnes and Arthur L. Andrews. CMSAF No. 11 David J. Campanale was unable to attend the Washington meetings.



Chief Airey

CMSAF MURRAY ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT – The 14th chief master sergeant of the Air Force, Gerald R. Murray, will retire this summer with more than 28 years' service. He has been CMSAF since July 1, 2002. "I've grown up as an airman," Chief Murray said. "The Air Force has been a way of life for me for so long, I know it will be bittersweet to say farewell. "I've been tremendously



Chief Murray

blessed in my personal and professional life and I owe a great deal to those Air Force leaders, mentors and peers who helped me throughout my career. The Air Force has given back to my family and me 10 times what I have given to it, and I am truly grateful." Chief Murray's official retirement date is Oct. 1, but a formal ceremony and appointment for the 15th chief master sergeant of the Air Force is planned for June 30. The Air Force chief of staff selects the individual to fill the position of chief master sergeant of the Air Force. Each major command and direct reporting unit commander and deputy chiefs of staff can nominate potential successors.

RETIREE DAY SEPTEMBER 30 -- Reservations have been made to conduct Bolling's annual Retiree Appreciation Day at The Clubs, Saturday, September 30. Col. (Ret.) John Moser, director of the Bolling Retiree Activities Office, made the announcement after negotiations with base officials. "Finding a venue large enough to accommodate all of our needs is a challenge each year," Moser said. "We are very appreciative of the consideration and support we receive from all of the active

force at Bolling. Our retiree community really looks forward to this event." The popular health screenings will precede the main program in the ballroom. The 11th Medical Group again plans to offer expanded lab tests, including oral cancer screenings along with glaucoma and cholesterol readings. Invitations have been extended to several prominent figures to deliver the keynote address. Base vehicle registration will be available in the club and two buffet luncheons will be offered. Special promotions for retirees are planned for the base exchange and commissary. The full day's program will be outlined in the next *Still Serving*, to be mailed in early September.

OPTIONS FOR AFRH FUTURE – The Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH) in Gulfport, Miss., was severely damaged during Hurricane Katrina last year. Many of the residents were relocated to the Washington campus. During a House Appropriations Subcommittee meeting on Military Quality of Life, Timothy Cox, AFRH chief operating officer, outlined options for the future: a 13-year plan to renovate the Gulfport high-rise structure at an estimated cost of \$589 million. Construction of a new facility would take two years and cost \$383 million. Other options involve aligning/combining the Gulfport and DC facilities.

NPRC EASES RECORD REQUESTS – The National Personnel records Center (NPRC) is making it easier for veterans with Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. This may be particularly helpful for those seeking to replace a lost DD Form -214, Report of Separation. The website address is vetrecs.archives.gov. Others in need of documents are asked to complete Standard Form 180 and mail it to NPRC in St. Louis. The form can be downloaded from the website or obtained from the Bolling Retiree Activities Office or from any VA regional office.

SBP INCREASES UNDER WAY – The Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) entitlement was increased to 45 percent on April 1. It was the second of four increases phasing in over the next two years. The first occurred last October, when minimum payments to surviving spouses age 62 and older increased from 35 to 40 percent. If a SBP recipient is under age 62, she is entitled to 55 percent of the annuity base amount until age 62, when entitled to Social Security at the early, reduced amount. On April 1, 2007, it will increase to 50 percent and on April 1, 2008, it will reach 55 percent. Additionally, SBP payments are adjusted annually by the cost of living allowance. In December, SBP recipients receive an annuitant account statement from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service.

CHANGES RECOMMENDED IN PAY SYSTEM

The Defense Advisory Committee on Military Compensation is recommending sweeping changes that, if approved, would bring military compensation more on par with private-sector compensation. The package includes two major ideas, retired Navy Adm. Donald Pilling, former vice chief of naval operations, explained. These include revamping the retirement system so service members receive more pay throughout their careers rather than at their completion, and basing pay on performance rather than longevity and other factors, he said. Pilling emphasized that any proposed changes to the compensation package would be grandfathered. Current active-duty members would not be affected. In terms of retirement, the committee recommends: vesting members at 10 rather than 20 years; paying graduated retirement plans ranging from 25 percent of base pay at 10 years to 100 percent of base pay at 40 years; establishing a Thrift Savings Plan with government contributions of 5 to 10 percent of base pay; and delaying payment of the retirement annuity until age 60. In terms of pay for performance, the committee recommends: revising the charts, based on time in grade rather than years of service; and eliminating “with dependents” and “without dependents” provision of basic allowance for housing so all service members in the same pay grade receive the same allowance. The proposed system would provide more up-front cash throughout active duty, Pilling said. He noted that most private-sector compensation packages give 80 percent of their cash up front, deferring just 20 percent for retirement. In contrast, the current military compensation package pays about one-half the total compensation up front and defers the rest. The seven-member committee spent a year reviewing the military pay package, holding public hearings and developing its recommendations.

AIR FORCE MEMORIAL GOING UP—Construction crews raised the first piece of the Air Force Memorial on top of a hill overlooking the Pentagon. The 40-foot long piece of stainless steel, which weighs more than 28 tons, will be followed by 14 more pieces. When completed, the memorial will be 270 feet tall. “The design is a take-off on the Air Force (jet aircraft) doing the bomb burst maneuver . . . also, that graceful arc of a missile launch and there are three spires,” said retired Maj. Gen. Ed Grillo, Air Force Memorial Foundation president. The three upward spires represent the Air Force’s core values — integrity, service before self and excellence in all we do. The memorial is scheduled to open October 14 in conjunction with the Air Force’s year-long celebration of its 60th anniversary. CBS Newsman Bob Schieffer has been invited to emcee the program. An Air Force ROTC graduate, he served on active duty during the early 1960s. The memorial will also include a bronze honor guard, inscription walls and a glass chamber of contemplation to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice. “There have been a total, including our predecessor organizations, of over 54,000 people that have been killed in action. We need a tribute and it’s long overdue to the United States Air Force,” General Grillo said.



Architect's view of AF Memorial which will overlook the Pentagon.

GOOD CONDUCT MEDAL IS HISTORY—The Good Conduct Medal is history. “The quality of our enlisted personnel today is so high, we expect good conduct from our airmen,” said Brig. Gen Robert R. Allardice, director of airman development and sustainment. “It begged the question, ‘Why do we have a Good Conduct Medal? Having a medal for good conduct is almost to say we don’t expect

airmen to do well, but if they’re good we will give them a medal,” he said. “It’s kind of insulting in our Air Force today.” One must look at the history of why the medal was created in the 1960s. The military was using the draft and involved in the Vietnam War. The Air Force didn’t have any other method to recognize airmen. Today, the Air Force Achievement Medal recognizes outstanding airmanship. “When we looked at that history it was clear that the Good Conduct Medal has outlived its usefulness,” said CMSAF Gerald R. Murray. “Today’s all-volunteer force is committed to serving honorably, and good conduct is what we expect from every airman—officer and enlisted.” “We live by our core values,” Chief Murray said. “When members of our service stray from those values, they do themselves and all airmen a disservice. When that happens, commanders have the tools they need to evaluate the situation and the individual’s worthiness for continued service. General Allardice said that it is the uniform, not the Good Conduct Medal, that represents what airmen are all about. Airmen who have earned the Good Conduct Medal are still authorized to wear it.

ARCHIVES RECEIVES DOD DIGITAL RECORDS—The Defense Department became the first federal agency to transfer digital records to the National Archives and Records Administration. “The significance is that we are for the first time bringing electronic records into the National Archives so that they can be preserved and described and eventually be made available,” said Paul Wester, director of NARA’s Modern Records Program. Electronic transfer of documents from the former Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad essentially reduced the equivalent of truckloads of paper down to a couple of shoeboxes, Wester said. “Usually what happens is that agencies create and keep their records on hand in their facilities to support their business. What we are doing here in this case is bringing in electronic records so that we can ensure that they will be preserved until the end of the republic,” Wester said. About 5 percent of all federal records become permanent and go to the archive. “When you think records, it was the file folder moved to the box, and then when the file cabinet was full at some point somebody had to decide what do we have to keep temporarily and what do we throw away,” according to John Krysa, chief of the Directives and Records Division for DoD. The normal process of preserving paper documents was to remove staples to avoid rust and put them in acid free boxes. Today, we have records that are born electronically and never make it to paper,” Krysa said.

CANDY BOMBER SHARES BERLIN AIRLIFT STORIES

Two sticks of gum given to children living in a bombed and besieged city led to a prominent place in history for retired Col. Gail S. Halvorsen. At the time, he was a first lieutenant flying C-54s filled with supplies for blockaded West Berlin. Colonel Halvorsen – the Candy Bomber – is the most recognized individual to come out of the Berlin Airlift. Today, he shares his experiences with school-age children, reading “Mercedes and the Chocolate Pilot,” a book written from the perspective of a little girl living in Berlin during the airlift. He shows the children how to make a parachute attached to a chocolate bar, much like those he dropped from his aircraft almost 60 years ago. Colonel Halvorsen started flying into Berlin two weeks after the start of the operation in 1948. He could see the rubble of the bombed-out city from the air, but flight crews were not allowed to leave their aircraft. They departed as soon as the cargo was unloaded. Eventually, he was able to leave Tempelhof Airport. He talked with children congregated around the airport’s fence line, watching inbound aircraft. “After a while, I realized these kids hadn’t asked for anything.” He offered two sticks of gum, half expecting a fight over the rare treat. Instead, the children split the sticks as far as they could go, and those who didn’t get any of the gum were given small strips torn from the foil wrappers so they could at least smell the sweets. This unselfishness impressed Halvorsen so much that he made a decision that could have gotten him court-martialed for breaking flying regulations. He told the children to watch for his aircraft. He told them he would wiggle his wings on approach to the airport so they could recognize him and that he would drop candy to them from the aircraft. Halvorsen asked fellow pilots for their rations so he could get them to the children. They warned him of the consequences of throwing anything like that from an aircraft in flight without permission. Attaching parachutes made from handkerchiefs and string to each chocolate bar, he kept his promise to the children on his next mission and again each time he flew for about three weeks. Upon his return to Rhein-Main from a flight into Berlin, he was called into his commander’s office. The colonel produced a German newspaper with a story of “Uncle Wiggly Wings,” one of the names the children of West Berlin had given him. The news report led to worldwide publicity. Donations of candy and handkerchiefs from manufacturers and individuals arrived. Eventually, service clubs made parachutes and attached candy for other aircraft to drop throughout the city. The Berlin Airlift is remembered as a remarkable accomplishment in the face of adversity. Over 15 months, more than 2.3 million tons of supplies were flown into the besieged city. American aircraft also dropped more than 23 tons of candy to the children of West Berlin. Colonel Halvorsen received the Cheney Award in 1948 for “...an act of valor, extreme fortitude or self-sacrifice in a humanitarian interest.”



USAF Photo by Ed Drohan
Retired Col. Gail S. Halvorsen shows parachute attached to a candy bar.

JROTC SEEKS INSTRUCTORS – Air Force Junior ROTC has 150 positions open for retired or soon-to-be retired officers and NCOs in high schools throughout the nation at the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year. Applicants must be retired from active duty less than 5 years from the effective date of employment. This may be waived in exceptional cases. Instructors wear the Air Force uniform. They must meet Air Force weight/body fat standards and have high standards of military bearing, appearance and moral character. Officers require a baccalaureate degree or higher from an accredited institution. NCOs must have a high school diploma or equivalent. Instructors receive, at a minimum, a salary equal to the difference between their retirement pay and their active-duty pay and allowances. For more information, call 1 866 235-7682, ext. 35275 or 35300.

DEEP FREEZE ENDS RECORD SEASON – Joint Task Force Support Forces Antarctica, Operation Deep Freeze, an annual Antarctic airlift mission in support of the National Science Foundation, completed a record-filled season. Flight operations were supported by LC-130s from the New York Air National Guard’s 109th Airlift Wing at Scotia, N.Y., and by an Air Force C-17 Globemaster III from the 62nd Airlift Wing at McChord AFB, Wash. The units exceeded all-time mission and cargo records in the coldest, most inhospitable continent. Flying from Christchurch, New Zealand, the C-17 completed 51 transport missions, moving more than 3 million pounds of cargo and 4,739 passengers into McMurdo Station, Antarctica. On the ice, ski-equipped LC-130s completed 843 missions, moving a record 14.4 million pounds of cargo.

SAVINGS IN MANHATTAN – Thrifty visitors to new York City may wish to check into accommodations offered by the midtown Soldiers’ Sailors’, Marines’ and Airmen’s Club at 283 Lexington Avenue. “Where else can you stay in Manhattan for \$25 a night per person,” asks Peter LeBeau, executive director of the historic 79-bed facility. “We call it a club, but there are no members or dues. We’re simply an association of people who have served, who care about the military mission and care about what we do.” Founded in 1919, the club has 21 rooms with two beds to accommodate couples and six rooms with three beds. One room has four beds and another with six for families or groups. The club has hosted more than 2.5 million guests. It offers a library with two Internet stations, several large event rooms, a television room and a dining room with a microwave oven and toaster grill. While this may sound great, guests need to know it is not the Waldorf. For complete information, call 1 800 678-8443.

NEW JCS ENLISTED ADVISOR – Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Marine Gen. Peter Pace chose Army Command Sgt. Maj. William. J. Gainey as the first JCS senior enlisted advisor.

HIGHER TRICARE PREMIUM PROPOSED

The Defense Department proposes that working-age military retirees and their families pay higher premiums to help address rising health care costs. The proposed changes would apply only to military retirees under age 65 and their families. There would be no change for active-duty military or their families, or military retirees age 65 or older and their families.



When the Tricare health care program was established in 1995, retirees contributed about 27 percent of the cost of their benefit, Dr. William Winkenwerder Jr., assistant secretary of defense for health affairs, said. Military health care costs doubled from \$19 billion in 2001 to just over \$37 billion in the 2006 defense budget, Winkenwerder said. Today's average military retiree contribution for health care coverage is about 10 to 12 percent. Civilians under private plans generally pay

between 35 and 40 percent of their health care costs, Winkenwerder said. The proposed rate hikes for retirees under age 65 would be phased in over fiscal 2007 and 2008.

The House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel in April voted to block for at least two years any increases in Tricare beneficiary cost-shares. It was the first formal step by Congress to derail plans to raise fees, co-payments and deductibles for military retirees under age 65 and their families. The Military Coalition, a group of 36 military, veterans and uniformed services organizations, has placed the issue high on its priority list for the 2nd session of the 109th Congress. It seeks the grassroots support of its more than 5.5 million members.

The current Tricare Prime annual enrollment fee for retirees is \$230 for individuals and \$460 for families for both enlisted and officer retirees. Proposed changes would increase Prime enrollment fees for junior enlisted retirees at pay grades E-6 and below to \$325 per individual and \$650 for families by October 2008. Enlisted retirees at pay grades E-7 and above would pay \$475 for individuals and \$950 for families. All retired officers would pay \$700 per individual and \$1,400 per family.

DOD ATTACKS RISING PHARMACY COSTS— The Department of Defense saved \$500 million in its first year of reviewing and classifying prescription drugs. In addition, since its start in 2001, the Pharmacy Data Transaction Service has avoided more than 171,000 potentially life-threatening drug interactions. More than 2.1 million prescriptions are filled in the military health system weekly. The uniform formulary established a process that places prescription drugs into one of three cost-share tiers, based upon their relative clinical and cost effectiveness.

TRICARE RATE INCREASE— The Tricare Standard diagnosis-related group (DRG) daily rate for most civilian non-mental health hospital admissions is \$535, up from \$512 last year. This rate increase applies only to retirees, their families and survivors who use Tricare Standard. They must pay either \$535 per day or a cost share of 25 percent of the hospital's billed charges, whichever is less. A 25 percent allowable charge for professional services could also apply. There is no DRG rate increase for beneficiaries who use a civilian Tricare network facility under Tricare Extra. Rates for inpatient mental health care or a substance-use disorder increased from \$169 to \$175 per day for retirees, their families and survivors who use Tricare Standard. They also pay 25 percent of the allowable charge for separately billed professional services. The inpatient mental health rate is unchanged under Tricare Prime and Extra for family members of active duty service members, military retirees, their families and survivors.

JOINT CLINIC IN SAN ANTONIO— The South Texas Veterans Health Care System and Wilford Hall Medical Center at Lackland AFB plan to open a new clinic in San Antonio in October. "This clinic is an innovative venture between the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense to treat both VA and DOD beneficiaries," said Jose Coronado, director of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System. The Air Force and VA will jointly operate the 30,000-square-foot outpatient clinic which will serve both VA and DOD beneficiaries. The clinic will be staffed by four VA and four Air Force providers, offering services to approximately 10,000 veterans and military family members. Active duty military members will continue to see their established primary care manager. Specialty care will include mental health, nutrition, optometry, pediatrics and women's health services. The clinic will also offer on-site pharmacy, laboratory and radiology services.

NEW PHARMACY SEARCH TOOL ON WEB— Tricare has a new pharmacy Formulary Search Tool, allowing beneficiaries to find medication-specific information with either a drug name or a medical condition. The search tool can be accessed through the Tricare Pharmacy Web site. It checks availability of specific medications through Tricare Mail Order or Retail Pharmacy programs; lists medications on the Basic Core Formulary, available at full-service military pharmacies; finds copayment information for prescription medications; learns about generic equivalents for brand-name medications, quantity limits or prior authorization requirements and FDA approved drug uses, side effects and potential interactions with other medications. Beneficiaries should consult their provider, pharmacist, or other health care professional for specific questions regarding their medications. For more information on the Tricare Pharmacy Program and to access the Formulary Search Tool, visit the Tricare Pharmacy home page, www.tricare.osd.mil/pharmacy. The search tool is accessible at www.tricareformularysearch.org.

2011 TARGET FOR AREA MEDICAL CHANGES

Medical services at Walter Reed Army Medical Center are expected to be realigned within the National Capital Area by 2011. Some services will move to an enlarged DeWitt Army Community Hospital, still on the drawing board at Fort Belvoir, Va. Other services will move to Bethesda, Md., as part of a new tri-service medical center on the present National Naval Medical Center campus. It will be renamed Walter Reed Military Medical Center. In the interim, new medical facilities will be designed and completed at Bethesda and at Fort Belvoir. Services offered at Bethesda, Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews AFB, Md., Walter Reed and DeWitt will operate in a coordinated manner until construction is completed.

Walter Reed and Bethesda have worked together for years, sharing many responsibilities. All obstetrical care is done at Bethesda while specialty and inpatient pediatrics and complex gynecology care are provided at Walter Reed. More than 90 percent of all graduate medical education training programs have been merged with trainees moving between the two campuses. Current projections will expand inpatient capacity at Bethesda to about 300 beds and at DeWitt to about 150 beds. The bottom line is that construction must be completed and services successfully realigned before closure of the present Walter Reed installation, now scheduled for 2011.

Meanwhile, plans moved ahead at Walter Reed for a \$10 million state-of-the-art rehabilitation center for amputees. Construction is expected to be completed in late 2007. The 30,000-square foot addition will include a running track, climbing and rappelling wall and a vehicle simulator. In January, the hospital opened a renovated gynecologic disease center. The 8,000-square foot facility consolidates patient care, administration and research activities for the Division of Gynecologic Oncology to serve about 3,000 patients annually. General Services Administration, the State Department and the District of Columbia have indicated interest in using parts of the campus, should the center close in 2011.

AHLTAREARSITS HEADLOCALLY—Implementation of the Armed Forces Health Longitudinal Technology Application (AHLTA), a global electronic health record system, is making its presence felt in area military treatment facilities. The system was started at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda last year. Conversion is under way at the Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews AFB, Md., and DeWitt Army Community Hospital at Fort Belvoir, Va., By the end of the year it is scheduled to reach all 139 DoD health facilities. The goal is to enable providers to capture patient care treatment and intervention through computers so that eventually a paper record will not be necessary. An estimated 9 million health records of military personnel, family members and retirees will be maintained. As in the case of any new program, there are growing pains. Before one can go faster, he proceeds slowly. It takes more time to document a patient's visit in a computer than it does on paper. Legibility is definitely expected to be an improvement.

VA WELCOMES WOMEN VETERANS—We're seeing a dramatic increase in the number of women veterans turning to VA for health care," according to Carole L. Turner, Veterans Affairs' national director for the women veterans health program. "And the satisfaction they're expressing about the health care they receive at VA is improving tremendously." Turner said VA offers comprehensive medical services, including health promotion and disease prevention and primary care. There is also women's gender-specific health care, such as hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility treatments. "If a specialty isn't available in-house, VA will contract out with providers in the community," said Turner, a former Air Force nurse who has more than 20 years of VA experience. Military sexual trauma treatment includes counseling and treatment for any emotional or physical condition experienced on active duty. Turner said women often seek treatment for "the same kind of health conditions that men experience — diabetes, heart disease, orthopedics care, dental care." However, women veterans also require certain unique health care services, such as maternity care. "The VA offers one-stop care for the majority of biological, psychological and social health care problems women might be experiencing," Turner said.



Carole L. Turner

PROGRAM TARGETS DIABETES, OBESITY—With obesity and deadly diabetes at significantly higher levels among America's veterans, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are educating veterans and their families how to combat these health issues. According to the American Diabetes Association, 7 percent of the U. S. population has diabetes, and the rate increases with age. Among veterans receiving VA health care, who are on average older than the general population, the rate is 20 percent. VA medical centers are promoting nutrition and exercise with local groups in 40 communities that receive grants from HHS in a program called "Steps to a Healthier US." Overweight patients receiving VA health care may participate in weight-loss programs tailored to their needs. They may also receive pedometers, diet advisories and "prescriptions" suggesting how much to walk—or, in the case of wheelchair users, how much to roll.

ANDERSEN AFB: FOCUS ON FUTURE IN ASIA-PACIFIC

Air Force leaders are once again focusing on Andersen AFB, Guam, to provide peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. “No longer is Andersen the sleepy hollow it was known as following World War II and Vietnam,” said Col. Michael Boera, 36th Expeditionary Air Wing commander. In 1972, the base was the site of the one of the most massive buildups of airpower. More than 15,000 people and 154 B-52 Stratofortress bombers lined the flight line.

The build-up is again under way. Growth includes continued bomber and fighter rotations with the potential for permanent aircraft. Nearby Northwest Field is turning into an expeditionary combat support training area, while the north ramp may include facilities for fighters like the new F-22A Raptor. The south ramp will see the addition of the Global Hawk unmanned aerial vehicle mission. The Air Force wants Andersen to host squadrons of bombers, air refueling tankers and fighter/attack aircraft on a regular basis with the capability to respond to any threat in the Pacific.

That would result in an increase in the current population of 3,700 permanently assigned airmen and Department of Defense civilian employees. Guam is valuable because as a United States territory, over-flight or landing rights are not required. During times of political uncertainty, the U.S. military always has permission to operate from Andersen AFB. Some of today’s challenges include limited maintenance space and adding a corrosion control facility, fuel cell facility and hangar space. Planned construction projects include new hangars, a medical and dental clinic, a military working dog facility, water tanks, and a maintenance complex.

MILITARY LEADS MOST-ADMIRED POLL – The military is the most admired institution in America, according to a Harris Poll. A total of 47 percent of Americans said they have a “great deal” of confidence in the military. Some 38 percent said they had “only some” confidence and 14 percent said they had “hardly any” confidence in the military. The military was followed in the poll by small business with 45 percent of saying they had a great deal of confidence; colleges and universities, 38 percent; the Supreme Court, 33 percent; and Medicine, 31 percent. At the bottom of the survey were law firms at 10 percent, Congress, 10 percent, organized labor, 12 percent, major companies, 13 percent and the press, 14 percent. Anchoring the middle was organized religion at 30 percent, the White House, 25 percent, public schools, 22, courts and justice system, 21, and television news, 19. Harris Interactive pollsters canvassed 1,016 U.S. adults via telephone. The sampling error for the survey is plus or minus 3 percent.

VA, GUARD TRAIN BENEFITS ADVISORS – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the National Guard Bureau have teamed up to train newly created State Benefits Advisors (SBAs) to help ensure a seamless transition for Guard members returning from active-duty deployments. The 54 SBAs are recently returned veterans. In addition to advising state adjutants general and governors, the SBAs serve as statewide points of contact providing advice to Guard members and their families. They will participate in the Reserve and National Guard mobilization and demobilization process and provide materials on VA benefits, compensation, education, vocational rehabilitation, life insurance, home loans, and burial benefits.

HIGHER LIMITS IN VA HOME LOAN PROGRAM – America’s veterans and their families have a greater chance to make their dreams of home ownership a reality, thanks to an increase in the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) home loan guaranty limit. Since January 1, veterans have been able to get no-down payment loans guaranteed up to \$417,000. The previous ceiling was \$359,650. The Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 tied increases in the VA guaranty to increases in the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation’s conforming loan limit. When this limit increases, VA guaranty limits also go up, allowing VA to keep pace with rising home values. VA-guaranteed home loans are made by banks and mortgage companies to veterans, service members and reservists. With VA guaranteeing a portion of the loan, veterans receive a competitive interest rate without making a down payment. More information about VA home loan benefits is available by calling 1 800 827-1000.

STANDARDIZED ID CARD PLANNED – A standardized identification card is being developed for federal employees. The card will replace common access cards that military personnel, government civilians and contractors now hold. The color scheme will be different and more information will be embedded in the card. The biggest change will be the addition of wireless technology, allowing the cards to be read by machine from short distances. This will make the cards easier to use for access to buildings than CACs, which must be swiped through a reader. Initial distribution of the new cards is expected in October.



USAF Photo by MSgt. Val Gempis

B-1B Lancer takes off from Andersen AFB, Guam, during air expeditionary force deployment from Ellsworth AFB, S.D

AAFES OFFERS “WE’LL MATCH IT” PRICES

Since they were established in 1895, the military exchanges’ mission has essentially been the same: provide necessary merchandise and services to the military. The Army & Air Force Exchange Service is constantly seeking initiatives to meet the needs of troops and their families in the most affordable manner possible. Even with consistent monitoring, AAFES found it necessary to institute a program that would ensure that, in the event AAFES doesn’t have the lowest price; authorized customers always receive the best price. Today’s “We’ll Match It!” effort works in two ways. First, if customers see a price differential of less than \$10 they can tell the cashier who will match it on the spot. Customers who report a price difference of greater than \$10 dollars need only to bring a current local competitor’s ad to receive the reduced price. In either case the competitor’s item, of course, must be identical to the item in the AAFES store for this same-day pledge.

AAFES also offers a 30-day price guarantee on any item originally purchased from AAFES and subsequently sold at a lower price by AAFES, or another local competitor (excluding unauthorized dealers and warehouse clubs). Also, stores cannot accept challenges from any catalog or website, except for the Exchange Catalog and aafes.com. In 2004, AAFES contributed more than \$242 million dollars to Morale, Welfare and Recreation programs on military installations.

FRAUDULENT COUPONS HIT COMMISSARIES—The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) has increased its vigilance over use of fraudulent Internet or home-printed merchandise coupons. Commissaries accept Internet or home-printed coupons provided they have “dot-scan” bars below expiration dates or bar codes with product identification numbers. They can not be for free products. Counterfeit coupons are circulating on the Internet through auction services, message boards, e-mails and other means, according to a DeCA spokesman. Fraudulent coupons presented at commissaries were for products ranging from laundry detergents, air fresheners and deli meats to sodas, chips and over-the-counter medications. People who purchase or trade coupons are at a risk of receiving counterfeit coupons. Sale or transfer of coupons is a violation of virtually all manufacturers’ coupon redemption policies. Customers are urged to use coupons obtained only from newspapers or magazines, from a manufacturer or other legitimate coupon channel, including Internet sites. Legitimate Internet coupons feature dot-screen bars below their expiration dates. The dot-scan bars look like bar codes with broken bar patterns.

GIFTS IMPACT TROOP MORALE—Since troops deployed to Operation Enduring Freedom in the fall of 2001, the American public has spent millions of dollars on stickers and magnets with messages of support. In contrast, phone support programs that connect deployed troops with their families have received little attention. Any American can make a tangible impact on the morale of deployed troops by sending a Military Exchange Global Prepaid Phone card or a BX gift certificate through one of two Department of Defense-approved AAFES programs. “Gifts from the Homefront,” allows troops to purchase a wide variety of products at more than 50 BX stores in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom. Reports from Iraq indicate that the gift certificates are regularly redeemed for snack foods, cool drinks and electronics. “Help Our Troops Call Home” provides prepaid Phone cards that offer up to three hours of calling from the contingency theater to the United States. The cards are available on www.aafes.org or calling 1 800 527-2345. “Gifts from the Homefront” certificates can also be sent through www.aafes.org or toll free at 1 877 770-4438. Purchasers may send phone cards or gift certificates to individuals or to “any service member” by choosing to have it distributed through the Air Force Aid Society, American Red Cross, Coalition to Salute America’s Heroes, Fisher House, Operation Homefront, Operation Interdependence® or USO.

DECA STREAMLINES RETURN CHECK PROCESS—The Defense Commissary Agency has streamlined its processing procedures for returned checks. Returned checks normally routed back to commissaries for collection are now routed to a centralized processing site. Instead of commissary employees having to contact customers who write insufficient-fund checks, the centralized processor electronically deducts the amount of the checks from the customers’ checking accounts. This process, which doesn’t cost customers any more money in insufficient-fund service charges, standardizes redemption processes within commissaries and allows store employees to devote more time to customer service. The new process is a collaborative effort between DeCA, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the U.S. Department of Treasury, Bank of America and Solutran, the firm that provides the returned check processing services. Questions about the program can be addressed to the Agency’s customer service liaison, Judy Blair or John Littman, at 1 866 893-5015 between 6 a.m. and 6:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

PLASTIC BAGS EXPENSIVE—The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA) requires its sales stores to eliminate double-bagging unless a customer asks for it. Additionally, all commissaries are required to use paper bags except in the express lane or if customers specifically ask for plastic. “Anyone who feels they need to be accommodated,” said Scott Simpson, DeCA’s chief operating officer. “Our purpose is to control unnecessary costs, not inconvenience our customers.” As the price of oil rises, so does the cost of anything that uses oil—and it’s not just gasoline. Oil is also used in the manufacture of plastic bags, so increases in oil prices translate to higher plastic bag costs. Commissaries have nearly 100 million customer transactions annually.

NATIONAL CEMETERIES OFFER LASTING TRIBUTE

Burial in a national cemetery is open to all members of the armed forces and veterans having met the minimum active-duty requirements with other than dishonorable service. Their spouse, unremarried widow or widower, minor children and, under certain conditions, unmarried adult children, are also eligible for burial. About 1,800 veterans die each day, including some 1,100 with World War II service.



There are 136 national cemeteries, 122 with available space. The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), through its National Cemetery Administration, is responsible for 120 of them. Arlington Cemetery and one at the Armed Forces Retirement Home in Washington are administered by the Army. Fourteen national cemeteries are maintained by the National Park Service. Funeral directors make arrangements directly with a national cemetery.

VA has selected sites for new cemeteries in Pennsylvania and Florida. A 214-acre site at Dolington, Pa., 25 miles north of Philadelphia, will serve 170,000 veterans within 75 miles. The nearest national cemetery with grave space is Indiantown Gap National Cemetery, about 90 miles west. VA plans to begin burials in late 2008. This first development will provide burial space through 2018.

A South Florida National Cemetery in Lake Worth covers 313 acre. It is expected to open for burials before the end of the year. More than 350,000 veterans live within the area. The Phase I design includes development of approximately 65 acres that will provide 23,000 gravesites for casket interments, most of which will be pre-placed crypts; a 15,000-niche columbarium and 3,100 in-ground sites for cremation burials. Other national cemeteries in Florida are in Pensacola, Bushnell, St. Augustine and Bay Pines. Future cemeteries are planned for Jacksonville and Sarasota areas.

An expansion program this spring and two future programs will extend use of Arlington National Cemetery to 2060. Completion of an \$8.1 million project added 26,000 burial sites. Another project in 2008 will add 17 acres from a former Fort Myer picnic area. By 2010, the cemetery will extend 44 acres into the old Navy Annex area, now being cleared. There are about 6,400 burials at Arlington each year. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices at 1 800 827-1000.

VA EXPANDS ONLINE GRAVESITE LOCATOR - The burial locations of more than 5 million veterans for whom the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has provided grave markers are available on the Internet, as well as the information inscribed on the markers. VA recently added 1.9 million records for veterans buried primarily in private cemeteries to its database. The gravesite locator previously carried records on 3 million veterans buried in VA national cemeteries since the Civil War, and in state veterans cemeteries and Arlington National Cemetery since 1999.

The new records date from January 1997, the earliest time for which electronic records exist. VA adds about 1,000 new records to the database each day. Last year, VA furnished nearly 369,000 inscribed headstones and markers for veterans' graves worldwide. Internet users only need to provide the last name of the deceased veteran or dependent. Typically, information includes name, birth and death dates, grade, branch of service and address and phone number of the cemetery. Veterans whose discharges are other than dishonorable, their spouses and dependent children may be buried in any national cemetery. No advance reservations are made. VA provides perpetual care, as well as a headstone or marker, a burial flag and a memorial certificate to survivors. Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 1 800 827-1000.

FORSENIC LAB NEVER SAYS NEVER - The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command's forensic lab at Hickam AFB, Hawaii, identified the "glacier airman," discovered frozen in a California glacier in October. Identification of Aviation Cadet Leo Mustonen came 64 years after an AT-7 plane crashed into Darwin Glacier in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It demonstrates the Defense Department's commitment to ensuring the fullest possible accounting of all missing service members, a command spokesman said. For more than six decades, the 22-year-old Brainerd, Minn., airman's fate was unclear. He was among four airmen reported missing after takeoff from Mather Field, Calif., in 1942. Also on board were 2nd Lt. William Gamber, Fayette, Ohio; along with aviation cadets Ernest Munn, St. Clairsville, Ohio, and John Mortenson, Moscow, Idaho. Five years later, hikers uncovered the wreckage. Three sets of human remains were buried as a group in Golden Gate National Cemetery. In October, hikers found more human remains preserved in ice on Mendel Glacier. The remains arrived at the JPAC lab wearing a World War II-era parachute stenciled, "U.S. Army." There were coins and personal items in his pockets. Records found that about 30 military planes had crashed on training missions in California during the early '40s. The lab used the airman's clothing, teeth and mitochondrial DNA to determine his identity. All families involved in the 1942 crash were notified. JPAC members work year-round to repatriate and identify remains of about 88,000 missing U.S. service members. They include one from the Gulf War, some 1,800 from the Vietnam War, 120 from the Cold War, about 8,100 from the Korean War, and more than 78,000 from World War II. Currently, the lab has more than 1,000 sets of remains to be identified.

SHORT SERVINGS

Cell Phone Use Restricted – A Defense Department joint traffic document states: “Vehicle operators on a DOD Installation and operators of government owned vehicles shall not use cell phones unless the vehicle is safely parked or unless they are using a hands-free device. The wearing of any other portable headphones, earphones or other listening devices (except for hand-free cellular phones) while operating a motor vehicle is prohibited.” Violators will be given three assessment points against their driving records or an appropriate fine.

Montgomery County Honors Moser – Col. John Moser, director of the Retiree Activities Office at Bolling AFB since 1995, was recognized by Maryland’s Montgomery County with its Arts and Humanities Volunteer Award. He was cited “for more than four decades of volunteer activities that energized the arts and enriched the lives of Montgomery County residents.” For many of these activities, he was recognized in 2000 by the City of Rockville with its prestigious Lifetime Achievement in the Arts Award.



General Smolen

AFDW Commander Named – Maj. Gen. Robert L. Smolen assumed command of the Air Force District of Washington at Bolling AFB. He had been director, Strategic Policy and Arms Control, National Security Council at the White House. He succeeds Brig. Gen. Duane A. Jones, who was selected to be director of Logistics, U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein AB, Germany.

Officer Distinction Eliminated – The Air Force has eliminated the distinction between active-duty regular and reserve officers. Previously, an officer who earned a reserve commission served in a sort of probationary period until promoted to major, when they could become a “regular” officer. In peacetime, reserve officers could be separated if a reduction in force became necessary and served a maximum of 20 years. Now, those on active duty are regular officers; those in the Reserves, reserve officers.

Pentagon Memorial Progressing – More than \$10.2 million has been raised for a memorial to 184 persons killed in the 9-11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon. This represents about half of the funds needed to complete the memorial which will set on two acres on the western face of the building. It will include 184 illuminated benches, each with its own lighted reflecting pool. Completion date is projected for 2008.

Assisted Living Added – Hawthorn House, a 64-apartment assisted living residence, is rapidly filling up at the Air Force Enlisted Village in Shalimar, Fla. The new addition augments independent living quarters in Bob Hope Village and Teresa Village, near Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field. For more information, call 1 800 258-1413.

U.S. Military Leaving Iceland – The United States will remove its forces from Naval Air Station Keflavik, Iceland, this fall as part of an ongoing Defense Department plan to restructure its military footprint overseas. Keflavik has been a base for U. S. fighter and patrol aircraft. About 1,200 U.S. service members, 100 DoD civilians and some 600 Icelandic civilians are based in Iceland at a cost of about \$260 million annually. The United States established the force in 1951 at NATO’s request. U.S. military involvement in Iceland began in 1941, when Marines arrived as part of an agreement between the U.S., Iceland, and Great Britain.

Management Process Contested – The Pentagon is appealing a federal court decision that stalled some labor-management provisions of the National Security Personnel System. The court ruled that proposed provisions would not protect employees’ ability to bargain collectively. In 2003, DoD established a civilian personnel compensation and management process to reward employees for performance. Previous civil service rules mostly tied employees’ raises to length of service. In 2005, the American Federation of Government Employees and 12 other labor unions filed a lawsuit over the NSPS.

Myers Joins Kansas State Faculty – Gen. Richard Myers, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, is a part-time professor in military history and leadership at Kansas State University. He received a bachelor’s degree at the school and was commissioned through its ROTC program. Myers, 63, travels about three times a semester from his Arlington, Va., home to spend three or four days at the Topeka campus. His lectures are closed to the public. He concluded a 40-year military career last year.

Retired Military Almanac Available – The Retired Military Almanac, a 256-page guide on many subjects of vital interest to military retirees, is available at many base exchanges. Order directly from the publisher for \$13.45 by sending a check or money order to Uniformed Services Almanac, Inc., P.O. Box 4144-AB, Falls Church VA 22044. For credit cards, call 1 888 872-9698. Online, go to www.militaryalmanac.com.



General Myers

Annual Parking Passes Available – Annual parking passes for the National Air and Space Museum’s Udar-Hazy Center near Dulles Airport are available for \$65 or, for members of the museum’s society, \$50. Daily parking costs are \$12. Museum admission is free. Full information is available on 703 572-4102.



HISTORIC ROLL CALL

Nine of the 14 airmen who have served as chief master sergeants of the Air Force gathered in Washington. Front, (L-R), Paul W. Airey, Gerald R. Murray, Robert D. Gaylor, Gary R. Pfingston. Back, Sam E. Parrish, Frederick J. Finch, James C. Binnicker, Eric W. Benken, James M. McCoy. See stories, Page 3.

USAF Photo by SrA Dan DeCook